

MONEY ORDER OFFICE

By Mike J. Burrows

An accountant named Gosnell, of Crutched Friars, first proposed a Money Order Office. This began functioning in 1792 under the Clerks of the Road. Although run as a private enterprise, it was closely associated with the Post Office.

The limit of an order was set at six guineas, the cost of an order being 6d. per £. Half of the cost to be borne by the receiver. A year later the cost was reduced to 4d, the remitter paying the whole amount. A stamp duty being added if the order exceeded two pounds.

Under the management of the Clerks of the Road the M.O.O, did not succeed as had been hoped and in 1798, the Office was taken over by three partners, who were known as Stow & Company, after one of the partners.

The year 1838 saw the M.O.O, came under the direct control of the Post Office. At the suggestion of Rowland Hill the rates were reduced in November 1840. The rates being; 3d. up to two pounds; 6d. for up to five pounds.

When Hill returned to the Post Office in 1846, the M.O.O. was placed under his care. Further reductions to the rates were made in 1871, with an order for less than ten shillings costing one penny and ten pounds being charged one shilling. (the limit had been raised to ten pounds in 1862).

Sloper approached the Post Office in 1870 to obtain what can only be described as a testimonial for his products, which he must have considered necessary for part of his advertising campaign in drumming up business in the private sector. In a letter from the G.P.O. dated 30th May 1870, the writer, Frank Ives Scudamore states.. . .the Machine has been applied to Money Orders issued from the Chief Money Order Office in London, for the purpose of perforating the date through the orders

The illustration opposite has been taken from a Money Order Advice form, headed Manchester.

As can be seen it is very similar to that used as a cancelling device on fiscals from the Company Registrations Office.

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